



**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
October 4, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm.

Present: Mayor: Charlie Miner; Council: Jahn Dyvik, Mike Feldmann, Gina Joyce, and Deirdre Kvale

Staff Present: City Clerk Moeller; City Attorney Thames; Chief Van Eyll

Absent: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MAYOR'S COMMENTS – LONG LAKE NEWS, MEETING REVIEW AND UPDATES

Mayor Miner offered the following comments and updates:

The Economic Development Authority met prior to the Council meetings to discuss and approve an amendment to a Purchase Agreement between the City and the Barbara A. Hendrickson Revocable Trust, and the same item would be discussed again by the City Council for ratification.

The Council also met in a Work Session immediately prior to the Council meeting and discussed various matters related to the Fire Department.

The Long Lake Fire Department held their annual Fire Prevention Open House on Monday, October 3, 2022, which was a great event for the community and well attended.

He stated that Long Lake resident, Grace Berbig, President and Founder of Letters of Love received the Promising Alumni Award on September 30, 2022 for her work which provides emotional support for patients in children's hospitals.

APPROVE AGENDA

A motion was made by Feldmann, seconded by Dyvik, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: all.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda consisted of:

- A. Approve Minutes of September 20, 2022 City Council Work Session Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of September 20, 2022 City Council Meeting
- C. Receive Minutes of September 13, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting
- D. Approve Vendor Claims and Payroll

A motion was made by Dyvik, seconded by Joyce, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Ayes: all.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

Brian Miller, 295 Lakeview Avenue – Mr. Miller stated that he was in attendance to share his opinion on the current situation with the Long Lake Fire Department. He commended the Council for doing such a good job, particularly on the Fire Department topic. He had found the update that was given at the last Council meeting to be very enlightening. He expressed his support for a fire district model for the Fire Department similar to the Excelsior Fire District that can take care of the community and not just specifically their own residents. He gave a summary of the discussion at the Orono City Council regarding their 'final offer' to Long Lake regarding the Fire Department. He commented that the overall feeling he got from that meeting was that it was hostile in nature, despite their statements that they were not proposing a hostile takeover of Long Lake's Fire Department. He pointed out that the conversations that happen at the Long Lake City Council and the Orono City Council are very different in tone and he feels that Orono's 'good faith negotiations' with Long Lake are just a ruse. He noted that he believes their offer to buy out Long Lake is just a way to get cooperation and let Orono run things.

Mayor Miner thanked Mr. Miller for his comments.

Alisa Benson, Candidate for Orono City Council – Ms. Benson indicated that she is running for City Council in Orono and wanted to introduce herself to the Long Lake Council. She shared that she has been door knocking over the last few months, has spoken to many residents in Long Lake as well as Orono, and what she has heard from both sides is that people are not okay with the current situation or the relationships between Orono and Long Lake. She stated that she's sincerely appreciated the reception she has gotten from the Long Lake residents because they have been very kind. She noted that is clear to her that Long Lake has provided incredible fire services for a very long time to residents from both cities. She commented that she was also appreciative of the representation of women serving on the Long Lake Council. She added that she also liked the positioning of the Open Correspondence portion of Long Lake's meetings being at the beginning of the agenda allowing people to share their thoughts earlier during meetings, which is something she would like to see change in the City of Orono.

Matt Johnson, Orono City Council Member – Mr. Johnson asked if there would be an opportunity for public comment during the later agenda item related to the Fire Department. He voiced a desire to clarify a few things and noted that the notice that Orono gave to Long Lake with respect to the written notice of cancellation or non-extension of the current agreement came at the request of City Administrator Weske. He stated that the reason that he made the statement that 'this was not a hostile takeover' at the Orono Council meeting was because he believes there is some sentiment out there that this is one. He stated that he believes this is just two cities who are trying to come to a solution that works for both sides, but ultimately they have to look out for the best interests of their own cities. He stated that their intention is not to come across as pompous and arrogant but to find a fair way out of the current situation. He stated that the spirit of Orono's offer to Long Lake was done in that spirit and at no point was his negotiation a ruse. He stated that all parties have spent a long time on this so the idea that his participation was a ruse is offensive to him.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Approval of Second Amendment to Purchase Agreement Between the City and the Barbara A. Hendrickson Revocable Trust Dated May 4, 2017

City Attorney Thames recalled that in 2021, the City entered into a Purchase Agreement which contemplated terms of sale of the City-owned remnant property just south of the Public Works building. The purchaser had an issue obtaining the plat drawing due to the surveyor being overburdened, so the agreement was extended over the summer with a deadline of October 21,

2022. He explained that the problem has persisted and there have been further delays which has resulted in this request for an additional extension. He noted that the preliminary plat has been submitted, so there has been progress, but full plat documents will need to be routed through the Planning Commission and the City Council. The request for Council action is to ratify the recommendation from the EDA to approve the proposed Purchase Agreement amendment and move the closing deadline to January 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Feldmann, seconded by Dyvik, to adopt Resolution No. 2022-50 approving the Second Amendment to Purchase Agreement with the Barbara A. Hendrickson Revocable Trust dated May 4, 2017 and authorize the Mayor and City Administrator to execute the same. Ayes: all.

Updates and Discussion Regarding Fire Department Matters

Mayor Miner noted that if there is anyone in the audience who would like to speak directly to this item, the Council will treat it similar to the Open Correspondence portion of the meeting and allow them five minutes to share their thoughts.

Cody Farley, 322 Dupont Street, asked if the public could be given the opportunity to speak after they hear what the Council discusses.

Thames responded that could be permitted at the Council's discretion.

Mayor Miner found that Mr. Farley's request would be fine and moved on to give an update to the Council on what had occurred since the last meeting. He shared that the City has continued to attend meetings with surrounding communities regarding future fire service planning. There has been discussion about the Loretto and Hamel Fire Departments merging to create their own fire district and Mayor Miner had been informed they have now agreed on the name, West Suburban Fire Department, which will begin as a non-profit. Once they have been up and running for a bit, they are talking about bringing on a few more cities in order to create a larger taxable fire district. He reported that Long Lake had received a letter from the City of Orono dated September 27, 2022 titled 'An Offer for the Transition of the Long Lake Fire Department to the City of Orono'. The letter will be posted on the City's website by tomorrow so residents can read it themselves.

Council member Dyvik gave a presentation to the Council that outlined his view of the situation and clarified that he had not shared his independently prepared presentation previously with the Council or the staff. He had asked Fire Chief Van Eyll for some data that was provided for inclusion in his presentation. He highlighted general points including the status of the current contract which will be expiring December 2025; the City's desire to maintain a partnership with area communities; that Orono has initiated steps to takeover the Long Lake Fire Department against the will of Long Lake; that Orono had paused this action to allow for negotiations between representatives of the two cities; and that the negotiation was cut short by a motion made by Orono Mayor Walsh which led to the current buy out offer from Orono. He recalled some comments that had been made by Orono Council members during the negotiation period and shared that those comments had given him some hope. The negotiating team had come up with four points where they felt both cities could have common ground, as well as a solution to create an independent Fire Board to govern the department. He observed that the Orono Council's negotiators appear to have ignored all the terms of negotiation and middle ground areas of agreement, and have reverted back to a full buy out offer from Orono to Long Lake. He pointed out a few items in the offer made by Orono that he feels are inaccurate such as the mention of \$1.5 million in deferred maintenance on Station 1, which suggested that Long Lake was deficient in upkeep and improvements, and emphasized that there is no evidence to any claim that the City has been deficient in the upkeep. The latest information he had received was that a new roof will be needed in 2028 which has been included in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). He stated that he felt some of the details Orono had utilized in formulating their offer were essentially a way to make their offer sound better than it actually is, and

referenced the addition of \$200,000 in retained CIP that Orono is claiming Long Lake will benefit from retaining and would not have to pay in. He clarified that the \$200,000 is Long Lake's internal accounting and not an allocated amount that belongs to Long Lake Fire Department at this time. He reiterated that he felt their offer misrepresented what the City's \$200,000 fund actually is. He stated that their offer also reflected a \$700,000 cost savings that they explained was going to be what Long Lake would have had to pay into a 10-year CIP, and with their offer that would be saved by Long Lake, and therefore Orono represented that their offer would really be a total compensation of \$2,488,000. He stated that math had been misleading information because it represented a 'notional CIP'. He explained that Orono Council member Seals had requested Fire Chief Van Eyll put together a CIP as 'if money was no object', which was ultimately a 'Christmas Wish List' and not intended to be a real working CIP. He read aloud from the September 26, 2022 Orono City Council meeting a statement made by Orono Council member Johnson which he felt was misleading and inferred that Long Lake did not know how to manage the budget for CIP. He reiterated that the notional CIP was created at the request of Orono Council member Seals and was not an actual CIP or real scenario. He noted that the Orono Finance Manager even made the statement at the September 26, 2022 Orono meeting that the CIP was not real, nor was it funded. He reviewed the current CIP that shows the current funding limitations and highlighted the example of a vehicle life span of 20 years having to be pushed out to 25 years. He overviewed what he considered to be a more realistic CIP that shows some middle ground from the 'Christmas Wish List' version, but admitted that his proposed version may still be too aggressive and would need to be discussed at the next Fire Advisory Board meeting. As next steps are considered, one of his biggest concerns is with the trustworthiness of the Orono leadership, especially in consideration of the narrative they used to justify their most recent decisions on the future of the Fire Department. He shared various examples to support his reasoning in not trusting them based on Orono's claims versus actual facts. He commented on his final thoughts about the situation and what he sees as a path forward including developing a realistic 15 year CIP with Chief Van Eyll and the Fire Advisory Board; more notification of the current Fire Department situation to the community that the Department serves to ensure that they are aware of this significant issue; and potentially surveying Long Lake residents in order to obtain their feedback based on some realistic cost impacts if the City sells versus if it does not sell.

Mayor Miner thanked Council member Dyvik for his presentation and noted that he felt it contained a lot of good information. He indicated he hopes ongoing conversations do not get to the point where each Council has to go to back and forth and clarify what the others have said because that will not be productive. He agreed that Long Lake needed to defend and clarify some things for the record, which Council member Dyvik had covered in his presentation. He shared some recent comments that had been made by the Orono Finance Manager that he felt were incorrect and misleading, and particularly expressed his appreciation to Council member Dyvik for clarifying the comment by an Orono Council member that Long Lake was concerned that firefighter performance would suffer if the Chief reported to Orono and not Long Lake, which was not at all a concern for Long Lake. This situation is not something that the City of Long Lake is taking lightly, and he feels badly that the firefighters are caught in the middle, but he added that he does not feel that Long Lake was the one who put them in that position. He explained that he thinks keeping the Fire Department together would be for the betterment of all communities, which is his ultimate goal. He stated that there are some tough decisions ahead for the Council, but reflected that he was glad that there had been factual information presented by Council member Dyvik.

Council member Dyvik mentioned that he had inadvertently skipped a slide in his presentation that outlined what a Fire Board would look like under the concept developed by the negotiating team. He reviewed the potential structure for a Fire Board and how membership and administration would work.

Council member Feldmann asked about the request for a 'pie in the sky' CIP budget and how that ended up landing in front of Orono as an actual CIP budget.

Council and staff discussed the 'pie in the sky' versus the actual CIP budget, noting that there is still opportunity for the Fire Advisory Board to review a more realistic, achievable 15-year CIP.

Council member Joyce thanked Council member Dyvik for taking the time to put together his presentation and reflected that it is important for everyone to have the facts.

Mayor Miner advised that the Council had discussed the offer from Orono during Closed Session in the Council Work Session prior to the regular meeting. He commented that even though the letter from Orono asked that the City respond by October 15, 2022, he was hopeful that they would be willing to understand Long Lake's viewpoint that more time for consideration is warranted because there are a lot of moving pieces to be considered when looking at the future of a 107 year old Fire Department. He mentioned that he would be out of town for business during the next Council meeting on October 18, 2022. He stated that he thought that Council member Dyvik brought up a good point about getting feedback from residents, and he has always believed that the City should solicit input from residents before such a big decision is made. He asked the Council if they had any thoughts on doing this via a public meeting or through a survey.

Council member Dyvik pointed out that Orono and Long Lake have spent the last eight weeks negotiating and heading down the road toward a Fire Board concept; yet Orono had decided to revert back to their original plan which is a lot for Long Lake to process, especially when the momentum of negotiations had been moving in another direction. He stated that he didn't think that Long Lake could truly be expected to respond to their offer by October 15, 2022.

Council members were unanimously in agreement that the October 15, 2022 deadline was inadequate to allow for formulating a response. Council members discussed alternate dates and times for an additional Work Session meeting prior to the deadline since Mayor Miner would be out of town for the next regularly scheduled meeting, and possible ways to communicate with specifically Long Lake residents in order to solicit their input.

A motion was made by Feldmann, seconded by Miner, to schedule a City Council Work Session for October 11, 2022 at 5:00 pm. Ayes: all.

Mayor Miner opened the floor to members of the audience and welcomed them to address the Council regarding this topic.

Bryan Miller, 295 Lakeview Avenue, asked if he would be able to submit his entire written comments to the City for official inclusion in the public record and for copies to be distributed to the Council. City Clerk Moeller confirmed that she could receive his written comments.

Cody Farley (Firefighter), 322 Dupont Street, indicated that he completely agreed with the Council's sentiments and that the recent offer from Orono to Long Lake was not in the spirit of negotiation, nor does it represent the heritage and historical value of the Long Lake Fire Department. He explained that when he takes those issues away and just looks at the offer on its own, it appears to be a pretty good offer. He stated that he used to be opposed to Orono's proposal but he has watched the two cities continue to butt heads and now thinks that Long Lake needs to consider what will happen if Orono decides at their next Council meeting that they are just done and decide to walk away. He added that although the City of Long Lake cannot trust the leadership in Orono, the fact remains that they are still the leadership over there who will be making the decisions. As a resident of Long Lake, he believes it may be time to say that Long Lake put up a good fight, and

move forward focusing on working to preserve the best fire service for the community that they can, which is what the Long Lake Fire Department represents in its current form.

Council member Dyvik recalled that when he had met with Mr. Farley prior to the offer from Orono, Mr. Farley had suggested a negotiating plan that looked at the Fire Department as a collection of assets; for example the Chief, as an asset, could go to Orono and then a different asset could go to Long Lake. He questioned if that was still Mr. Farley's opinion.

Mr. Farley explained that he saw that as the best actual negotiation path forward, but noted that he did not think it would be possible now. He suggested that it is very likely that next week Orono will say they are not interested in moving forward and are just done with any possible buyout. He stated that his original thought process was that the Long Lake Fire Department is a collection of assets and had raised the idea of shuffling the asset deck as part of the negotiation process.

Marty Schneider, 1176 West Wayzata Boulevard, encouraged the City Council to keep looking at alternatives. He expressed appreciation for the presentation put together by Council member Dyvik and recalled that he had served with him on the Fire Advisory Board for four years during his term in office. He remembered that back in 2017 there had been an issue where Orono had approved participating in the purchase of a fire truck and at the 11th hour, the truck was literally on its way and Orono had attempted to back away from the purchase, even though it had been approved and included in the budget. He communicated that he has strong reservations about Orono's proposal and rather than using the word 'hostile' he would refer to it as 'divisive'. He stated that he thinks the past and present Long Lake City Councils have tried very hard to be a good steward of the Fire Department, adding that one thing that had not been mentioned is that the City had approved pension increases regularly for the firefighters. He indicated that to him, if Orono's intent is not a hostile takeover situation and everything has just been misunderstood, then he doesn't understand the need for a deadline. In his opinion, the reality of the rhetoric by Orono does not match the facts or the spirit of what their proposal has been presented as. He mentioned that Long Lake will be adding onto their population by about 20% with construction projects underway along Virginia Avenue and other places throughout the City, and he encouraged the Council to continue taking a thoughtful approach to find a solution. He observed that if someone is giving this kind of deadline, he does not see that as negotiation, but as bullying. He asked the Council to take their time and look things over and do their due diligence.

Tim Hultmann, 280 Lakeview Avenue, commented that there is a contract that runs through December 31, 2025 and encouraged the Council to stick with the contract and continue to try to work toward a Fire Board and fire district concept. He encouraged the Council to 'stick to their guns' and stay on that path.

Matt Johnson, Orono Council member, stated that he was in attendance before the Long Lake Council to represent that he doesn't have anything to hide. To the point made by Mr. Schneider that Orono's offer is divisive, he would say that he wasn't sure it would be possible to negotiate without there being a certain amount of divisiveness. He noted that he has inherited some of the trust issues that exist between the two cities and recalled that Long Lake, within the contract, has first right of refusal for equipment and only needs to provide 90 days' notice. Lead times for equipment purchasing can be as far out as 30 months, so to prepare for potentially going out on their own, Orono felt they needed to start procuring equipment. He addressed a few of the issues that were raised in Council member Dyvik's presentation, including apologizing for particular language he used regarding 'deferred maintenance'. He stated as part of their appraisal process, items came forward as things that needed to be done in an imminent nature.

Council member Dyvik responded that those particular improvements were included in the CIP and scheduled for 2027 or 2028, which he would not consider 'imminent'.

Mr. Johnson replied that the scheduled improvements such as the roof and air conditioning replacements all led to reducing the overall value of the building. He clarified that his intent was not to insinuate that Long Lake was not doing their part, and conveyed regret that his use of the word 'deferred' had did that. The \$200,000 CIP savings that had been referenced in presentation of Orono's offer at their Council was related to Orono's proposal having a start date for a takeover of June of 2023, which would mean they would not be asking Long Lake for a CIP contribution.

Council member Dyvik disagreed that a savings would equate to \$200,000 and clarified that the amount is covered under the City's own internal accounting of a fund that they have for Fire use.

Mr. Johnson reiterated that the City would retain those funds.

Council member Dyvik agreed and noted that the City would retain them anyway.

Mr. Johnson explained that under their proposal, Long Lake would not have any CIP expenses.

Council member Dyvik responded that would not equate to a \$200,000 savings and the amount would be closer to \$10,000.

Mr. Johnson added that Long Lake is looking at an average over the next ten years of \$700,000 of CIP expenses.

Council member Dyvik pointed out that Mr. Johnson's number was inaccurate because he was looking at the 'pie in the sky' version of the CIP, which was not intended to be realistic.

Council member Dyvik and Mr. Johnson continued to debate the matter of the 'Christmas Wish List' version of the CIP as provided at the request of Orono Council member Seals, and the propriety of referencing it as part of their offer to Long Lake. Clarification was provided by Fire Chief Van Eyll regarding the direction he had been given in preparing the CIP requested by Council member Seals.

Council member Dyvik and Mr. Johnson also discussed Orono's annual contribution to the Fire Department CIP; whether and what requests for additional contributions had been made by Long Lake and denied or refused by Orono; and Orono's role in and veto power over the budgeting process, including participation in the Fire Advisory Board and budgeting activities.

Responding to a claim referenced by Council member Dyvik that Orono has stated they have no control over the budget, Mr. Johnson noted that he felt some of the sentiments from 'Orono' were from individual Council members and should not be grouped together as a message from their entire Council.

Council member Feldmann thanked Mr. Johnson and Orono Council member Seals for inviting him to meet with them for lunch the day before. He stated that there was a conversation about trust and the need to ensure that they were all on the same page. He noted it appears that Orono Council member Seals was the origin of the notional CIP being discussed and he continues to have questions on how that made it into Orono's hands for a vote, and added that all 10 members of the Orono and Long Lake City Councils need to resolve how that was presented as a totally realistic CIP.

Council member Dyvik reflected that he has enjoyed getting to know Mr. Johnson through the negotiation meetings and reflected that Mr. Johnson had voiced his support for the Fire Board concept if he could get the majority of their Council to go for it. He indicated he had understood that to mean that both Council members Johnson and Seals were supportive and would just need one more vote on their Council, but Mr. Johnson then communicated that it wasn't his job to

persuade anyone on his Council, which was a disappointment to Council member Dyvik. He noted that he and Mayor Miner were going to have to negotiate with their Council as well, because the negotiated concept was not a slam dunk and he had been prepared to work to persuade Long Lake's Council. He reiterated that he was disappointed because he felt like the negotiation committee was making progress which has now stopped because Orono's Mayor wanted it to stop. He recalled that Mr. Johnson had previously made a statement that if an agreement was not figured out by December, then Orono would have to start making alternate plans, which is also why he did not understand the October 15 deadline.

Mr. Johnson did not remember making that statement and noted if he had done so, it was in error because that was never his understanding. He commented that he thinks Orono is making the right decision by pushing this timeline and was hopeful that Long Lake will see this as the right opportunity. Based on all the information he has, he is trying to make the best decision he can, and he was attending the Long Lake Council meeting because he is trying to do the right thing for his city. He observed that the two cities do not trust each other and he cannot take responsibility for that, but is attempting to do his part. The offer Orono has presented makes Long Lake whole with respect to their financial contributions and keeps the department together. He added that he believes a Joint Powers Agreement for the area could be in the future, but the question is 'when' and he felt that Long Lake would struggle to put together an effective JPA without Orono.

Council member Joyce indicated that Mr. Johnson has stated that both he and Orono Council member Seals feel that a JPA is in the future and mentioned that she had also heard another Orono Council member voice that as well. Her understanding is that it takes about three to five years to set up a JPA or fire district and asked why the two cities could not work together with the remaining three years of the contract to get that set up instead of taking actions that appear short-sighted and self-serving. If everyone agrees that a JPA is the future, she did not understand why that wouldn't be where efforts are directed right now.

Mr. Johnson stated that from Orono's perspective, he believes it boils down to the trust issue and the fear that if they do not put their balls into motion in procuring equipment and getting things in order now, there is fear about what may happen when they arrive at the end of the contract and do not have a JPA.

Council member Kvale also suggested that the two cities could start negotiating a JPA between them right now.

Mr. Johnson stated that if Long Lake just agrees to Orono's offer then they can all look forward to other options in the future.

Council member Kvale questioned why they wouldn't just work now on modeling a JPA off the draft agreement points that were already negotiated amongst the negotiation team from both cities.

Mayor Miner recalled that a draft JPA model was provided to Orono in 2017 and suggested that City Attorney Thames is a great attorney that could help get things going.

Mr. Johnson indicated that the draft JPA had been prepared by Medina, to his understanding.

Mayor Miner had spoken with Medina's Mayor about that earlier in the day and she did not think she had drafted that JPA, so there is some confusion as to its origination.

Mr. Johnson commented that given the current situation, the time for that approach has passed.

Council member Kvale noted that it seems like the terms that were being negotiated before were a step towards a JPA, and Orono's recent offer appears to be a step away from the JPA.

Moeller commented that she has been with the City of Long Lake for 20 years and she had observed the trust issues between the cities in action on a number of issues in that time. What was so wonderful about the JPA concept, and moving towards a Fire Board as an independent agency governing the department, was that the two cities would no longer have reason to struggle with each other because the Fire Board would make governing decisions collectively, and the Chief would not be reporting to one city or another. She reiterated that the JPA/Board concept is beautiful because it takes the mistrust element that has been plaguing the cities for years out of the equation and keeps the Fire Department together, which is what she keeps hearing is the goal. She stated that she is very invested in this issue and apologized for appearing emotional, but explained that she has watched the community struggle with this for a long time. She felt that the JPA/Board model is the future and that it is a shame that the two sides were making progress towards that, and then all it took was a quick motion from Orono that she did not believe had any votes in opposition to remove that progress. She added that personally, that action taken just made her sad because she felt this this was an opportunity to move forward, and voiced that she believes there is still time under the current contract to work towards a JPA.

Mr. Johnson stated that he thinks there has been a lot of passion on both sides and clarified that he was not at the Long Lake Council's meeting to represent his City Council and was just speaking as Matt Johnson, who happens to be on the Orono Council.

Council member Dyvik added that he understood this wasn't easy and expressed appreciation for Mr. Johnson's attendance. He noted that he believed the Excelsior Fire District JPA took about three or four years to put together.

Council member Feldmann suggested that the contract that ends in 2025 could be extended a year, if there was an appetite there to make the JPA happen.

Mr. Johnson responded that right now, he did not believe that there would be a majority appetite amongst his Council to make that happen.

Moeller reiterated that she felt there is time to work on an agreement form and come up with something better.

Mayor Miner recalled that Mr. Johnson had previously stated that Long Lake is 'rigid' and stated that he would agree that the City is rigid behind the concept of a JPA. Fire districts are popping up all around the area and there have even been discussions popping up over having the same kind of JPAs amongst Police departments because they are all having problems hiring.

Mr. Johnson clarified that being rigid in what Long Lake believes was not intended to have a negative connotation. He reiterated that the offer that is in front of the Long Lake Council was one that was created with the thought of fairness and in consideration of what Orono's Council was willing to do.

Ryan Kanive (Firefighter), 45 Luce Line Ridge, Orono, reminded the Council that they have come to the Fire Department and suggested that they would keep them together. He commented that it seems like Long Lake is the only city that doesn't really have a plan. He stated that Long Lake has talked about JPAs but he would consider that a 'Hail Mary'. He added that Long Lake is saying that their goal is to keep the department together, but it seems like they do not actually have a plan to do so. Orono's plans may be bad, but they keep the department together and if they provide great service, he doesn't understand why the City wouldn't want to keep them together.

JB Seals (Firefighter), 3620 Eileen Street, Orono, stated that he is a volunteer firefighter with Long Lake and is also married to Orono Council member Seals. He reflected that he feels it is important for the Council to understand what a distraction this issue has become within the Fire Department. He explained that keeping the department whole is all they have ever cared about and the way things are going on both sides of the conversation, he has the strong feeling that the offer put forth by Orono will be rejected, which leads him to the question of what Long Lake's plan is moving forward. He stated that he does not think there is time to actually put together a workable JPA. He expressed his frustration that from Long Lake, he has not seen a counter offer or any creativity with another plan.

Mayor Miner responded that the 'plan' was for Council member Dyvik and himself to negotiate with Orono, and negotiated agreement points included the big sacrifice by Long Lake of giving up control of the 107 year old Fire Department, meeting Orono somewhere in the middle, and the creation of a JPA. Meetings with Orono Council members Seals and Johnson had resulted in the development of tenets for the basis of an agreement, and he noted that Long Lake would be happy to show that documentation to the Fire Department. Long Lake did have a plan that offered a huge concession by Long Lake, which they were willing to do because it had the benefit of keeping the firefighters together and for Long Lake to be served by the same Fire Department. He explained that this was their 'plan' up until September 26, 2022 when Orono Mayor Walsh threw out resolutions that were actioned upon to speed up the process as quickly as possible. The current contract is effective through December 31, 2025, but all contracts can be extended. He pointed out that the current contract has been in place for 20 years, it can be extended, and he remains hopeful about and committed to the creation of a JPA. He noted that even if Long Lake were to decide to accept the current offer from Orono, that would require a contract which will also take some time.

An audience member asked why Long Lake's timeline for a decision would be extended by putting out a survey to residents. He indicated that the residents voted the Council into office to make these kinds of decisions for them and that a survey would just lengthen the time that they do not have.

Barbara Schmidt, 50 Landmark Drive, Orono, spoke to say she would ask everyone to tell as many people as possible about what is happening because she does not think Orono residents know about the Fire Department situation. She believes residents are confused and there is a lot of misinformation out there. She noted that the quotes shared by Council member Dyvik were 'bang on' and informed Council that she had been at all those meetings. She stated that she thinks residents want a survey, an Open House, and want to be part of this decision; and she does not think anyone wants just five people from each city to make this decision. She asked that any survey prepared by Long Lake include Orono and not just be for Long Lake residents.

Mayor Miner reiterated that the Council had voted to hold an additional Work Session to discuss this issue on October 11, 2022.

OTHER BUSINESS

Public Works Questions - Council member Dyvik noted that he had some items that he would like to pass along to Public Works Director Diercks. Moeller advised that Public Works Director Diercks has been busy with all the projects happening in the City and explained that reaching him via e-mail was likely the best method.

Administrator's Absence, With Notice - Mayor Miner reported that City Administrator Weske had missed the Council meeting with prior notice given due to a vacation that had been planned a long time prior.

ADJOURN

Hearing no objection, Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Weske
City Administrator